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V-WING STARFIGHTER

Clone pilots' space superiority fighter

Clone Shock Troopers

Felucia – CIS stronghold

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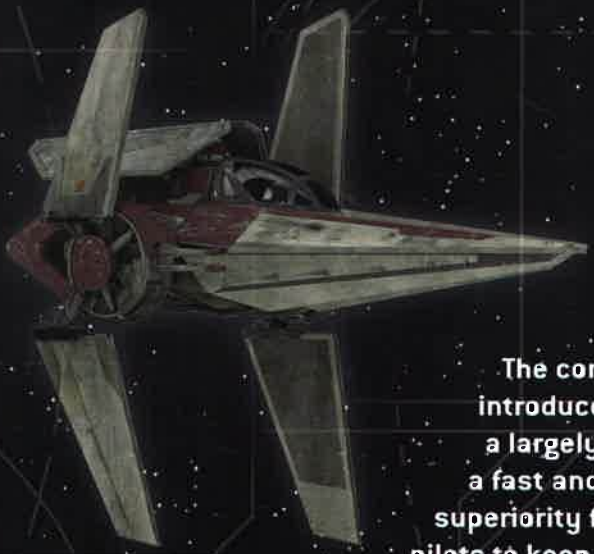
STAR WARS

"THEY ARE DOING THEIR JOB SO WE CAN DO OURS."

OBI-WAN KENOBI



The compact V-wing starfighter was introduced into the Republic's fleet in a largely successful effort to provide a fast and agile mass-produced space superiority fighter that could allow clone pilots to keep up with not only the abilities of their droid opponents, but also the uncanny talents of their Jedi generals.

KEEPING UP

THE V-WING STARFIGHTER

The Alpha-3 *Nimbus*-class V-wing space superiority starfighter was designed as a low-cost, mass-produced successor to the larger, slower V-19 Torrent fighter craft. That the ships resembled the Delta-7 *Aethersprite*-class Jedi starfighter was no accident – they shared the same designer, Walex Blissex.

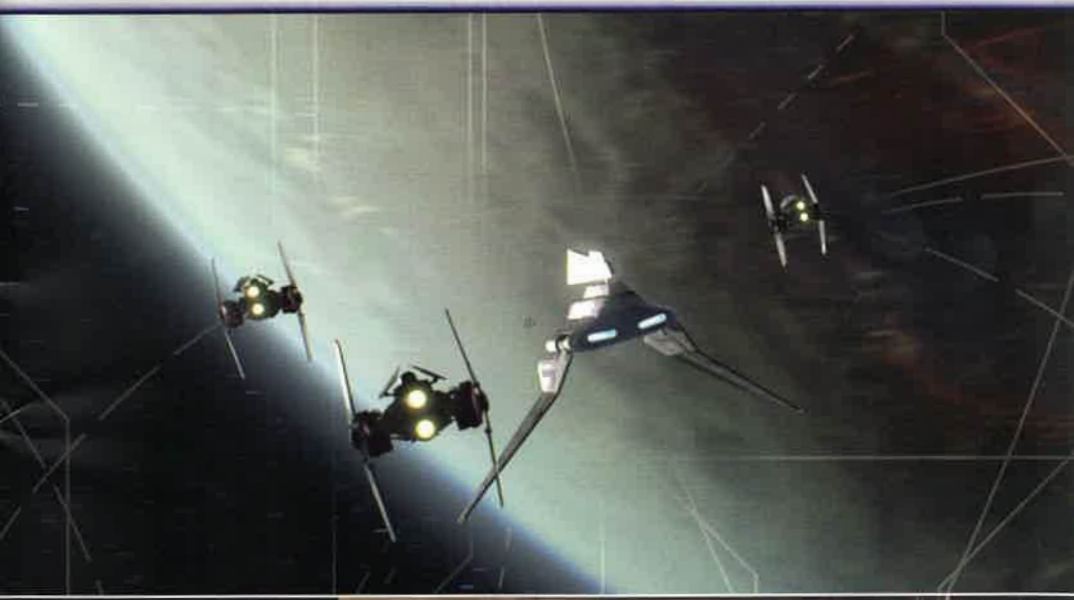
By the latter months of the Clone Wars, the V-wing (also known as the Nimbus fighter) was the most numerous starfighter in the Republic fleet, though it still had a huge number of the earlier V-19s in service. Short-range fighters, they were launched in great swarms from Republic warships. Flying in support of the heavier ARC-170s, the eye-wateringly fast V-wings were among the few craft able even to consider matching the agility of the advanced Eta-2 and Delta-7 fighters and their Jedi pilots.

Challenge of the Jedi

Both the Delta-7s and the V-wings were designed and built by Kuat Systems Engineering, and were the creations of the eminent designer Walex Blissex. Learning the lessons provided by the evolution of the Delta-7 Jedi starfighters, taking into account flight data and modifications made by pilots like Anakin Skywalker, Plo Koon and Saesee Tiin, Blissex created the V-wing to answer a particular need that became apparent quite quickly during the Clone Wars.

Jedi pilots leading fighter squadrons frequently left their escorts behind, as the clone pilots in their relatively bulky V-19

Torrents could not match the increasingly modified Delta-7s nor the reactions of the highly trained, Force-wielding Jedi. To ease this problem Blissex oversaw the creation of new combat computer systems fitted to the V-wings, with complex tactical analysis subroutines tied into sophisticated sensors to effectively boost the reactions of the pilots. As a result,



the V-wing starfighters and their pilots were able to keep up with the Jedi at last.

Bare Necessities

The wedge-shaped, stripped-down Alpha-3 *Nimbus*-class V-wing clearly showed its Delta-7 heritage. In turn, the A-wing starfighter which Blissex later designed for the Rebel Alliance kept the arrowhead profile. While the V-wing was fitted with deflector shields, it shared three main similarities with the Imperial TIE fighters that Sienar Fleet Systems would later design and build to replace the V-wings in the Imperial fleet.

Firstly, the V-wing fighter had no life support systems, so its pilots had to wear sealed flight suits. Secondly, the V-wing was armed only with laser cannon – two twin laser cannon, one to each side between hull and wing. Thirdly, the standard V-wing had no onboard hyperdrive system, making them short-range craft that needed to be carried into battle aboard capital warships. However, unlike the TIE fighters, V-wings did have an astromech droid aboard to assist with navigation and certain repairs and system monitoring duties.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS

DROID SUPPORT

Although the V-wing starfighter was a single-seater ship, the pilot was far from alone. Unlike the TIE fighters the Empire were to use as its replacement, the V-wing carried an astromech droid as standard.

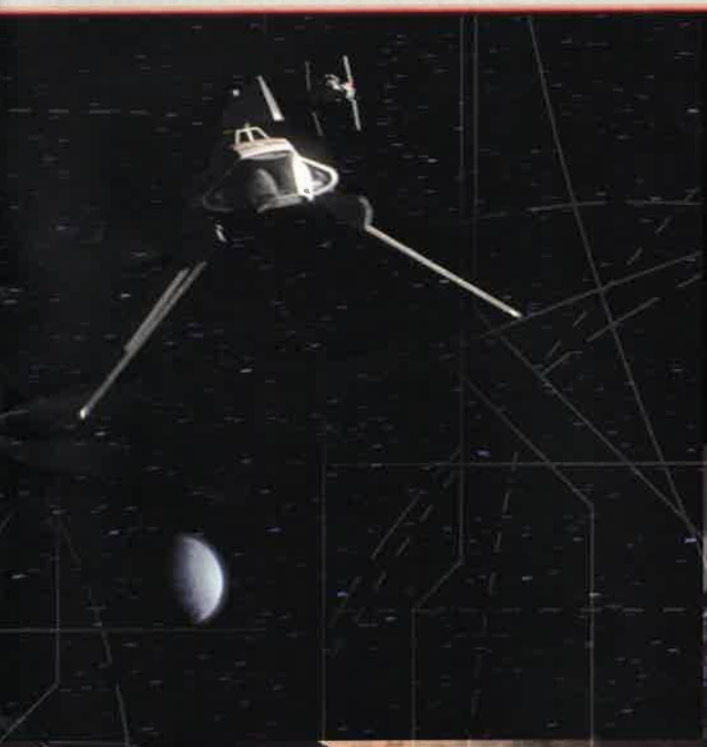
The most common astromech carried in the full socket just behind the cockpit was the 1m-high spherical Q7-series from Industrial Automaton. A more expensive option than the larger, tracked R-series, the Q7s moved on repulsorlifts. The upper dome was based on the R2-series astromechs, but the lower half was a similarly sized dome housing the (rather unreliable) engines that allowed the droid to float around. The socket could and did hold other droids, as the failure rate of the Q7s' repulsorlifts was very high.

Impressive

With the astromech handling some in-flight navigational and maintenance duties, a combat computer and flight control to boost their reactions, and shields to soak up some damage, the clone pilot of the V-wing was reasonably well looked after. Added to that, the deflector shield heat sinks were mounted above the engines behind the cockpit, partially covering the astromech droid and providing additional armour protection for the pilot. With its speed and incredible agility, the fighter craft presented a difficult target, and the two twin laser cannon provided a surprisingly wide firing arc.

Upgraded

The standard V-wing starfighter was impressive enough, easily matching the inhuman abilities of the droid starfighters of the Separatists. However, some modified versions of the Nimbus fighter were even more powerful. When Emperor Palpatine took his personal shuttle to Mustafar to rescue Darth Vader, then back to Coruscant to the medical centre where Vader was fitted with his armoured life-support suit, he was accompanied by three modified V-wings flown by his elite Royal Guard. Their starfighters had compact hyperdrives and boosted shields, making them a deadly escort force.

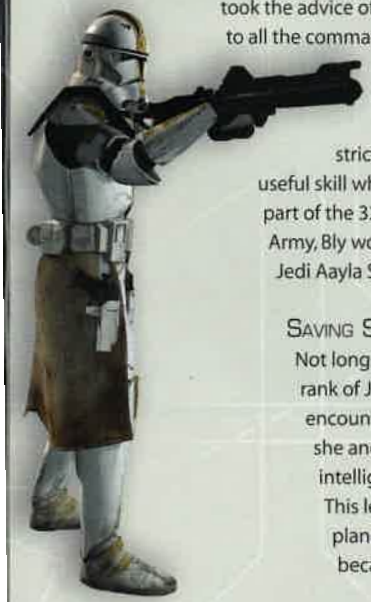


The V-wing was a very successful starfighter, serving with distinction at the Battle of Coruscant. However, the Empire soon replaced it with the TIE fighter series.

CLONE MARSHAL

COMMANDER BLY

Created on Kamino, one of innumerable clones of Jango Fett, clone CC-5052 was one of a first generation of specially trained clone marshal commanders. He served with great distinction in the 327th Star Corps, working directly with Jedi General Aayla Secura. Despite some regrets, he still followed Order 66 and subsequently became a loyal Imperial.



CC-5052 was given the name 'Bly' by ARC trooper Alpha-17, a veteran of the early stages of the Clone Wars who took the advice of Anakin Skywalker and gave names to all the commanders he trained. Bly was one of the first 100 troopers to be given the unique and highly effective training. It stressed thinking beyond the strictures of the training manual – a useful skill when working with Jedi Generals. As part of the 327th Star Corps, part of the 2nd Sector Army, Bly worked as liaison between the Twi'lek Jedi Aayla Secura and the regular troops.

Saving Skywalker

Not long after Secura had been raised to the rank of Jedi Master after her near-disastrous encounter with General Grievous on Hypori, she and Bly were able to capture intelligence from a Separatist tactical droid. This led to an assault operation over the planet Quell in the Outer Rim which became a rout of the Republic force.

Only the intervention of Anakin Skywalker aboard the Resolute saved the lives of Secura, Bly and some few others. Unfortunately, Skywalker was gravely injured and an accidental hyperspace jump threw Secura's damaged ship into a collision course with a star. Bly and his clones, working with Secura, managed to save the ship, only to have it crash on the primitive planet of Maridun.

Skywalker was dying, however, and desperately needed medical assistance. Bly had to work with the native Lurmen to bring aid to Anakin, while Secura was forced to remain in the Lurman village as a hostage – much to Bly's irritation. Skywalker was saved and, with Secura, Bly and the other clones, successfully defended the peaceful

PROFILE

Commander Bly

Species

Human (clone)

Homeworld

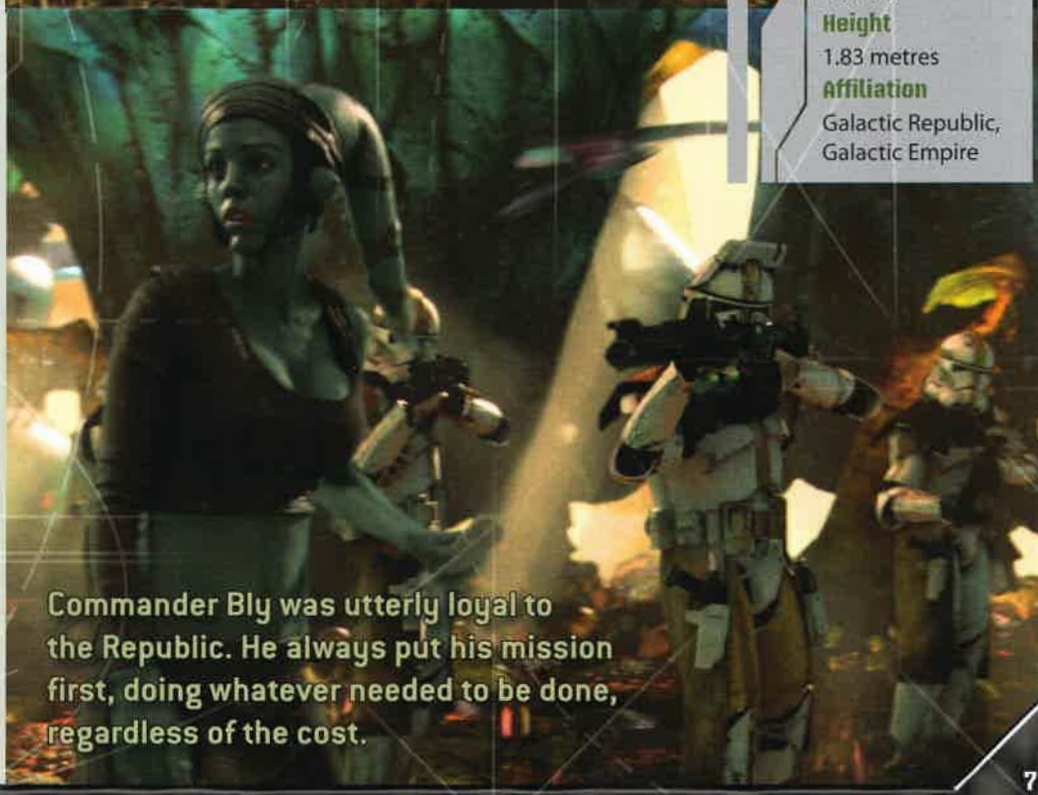
Kamino

Height

1.83 metres

Affiliation

Galactic Republic, Galactic Empire



Commander Bly was utterly loyal to the Republic. He always put his mission first, doing whatever needed to be done, regardless of the cost.

Lurmen from a full-on Confederacy assault. During the preparations for defending the village, Secura saved Bly's life, beginning a new phase of cooperation between the two of them.

Mutual Respect

The two made an excellent team. Though Secura was the ranking Jedi General, she trusted Bly completely. During a scouting mission in the Outer Rim Territories, Secura turned to Bly for tactical advice in dealing with a Confederacy attack on an unallied craft. Bly led the gunship scouting mission that resulted in the rescue of the unallied vessel and the destruction of the Confederate *Munificent*-class frigate.

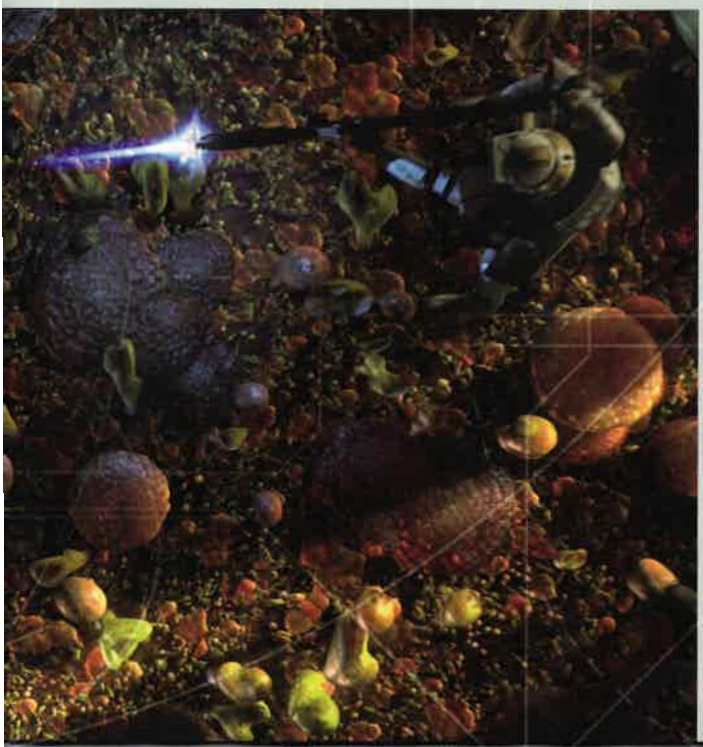
By the time of the aftermath of the bloody campaign against the Mandalorian Protectors on the Mid Rim 'hospital world' of New Holstice – a year and a half into the Clone Wars – Secura and Bly's relationship had become one of actual friendship, despite their very different ranks. This made it harder for both when Aayla's former master, the fallen Jedi Quinlan Vos, turned up during a mission to Honoghr to prevent the release of the defoliant toxin Trihexalophine 1138. Vos, who had been seen to defect to the Confederacy and work for Count Dooku, claimed to be a double agent. Secura believed him, though Bly did not. Vos remained a sensitive matter between them.

Did You Know...?

The clone troops on Felucia used AT-OT (All-Terrain Open Transports) to move about the dangerous terrain of the planet, but also rode gelagrubs, the larvae of Felucian ground beetles, which could move around undetected by enemy scanners. The adults had mirrored shells to reflect the Felucian sun's harmful rays.

Saleucami to Felucia

On Saleucami, the Confederacy were cloning and training Morgukai warriors. The Republic besieged the capital of the planet, with the returned Quinlan Vos as second in command. Secura and Vos teamed up to deal with the threat, leaving Bly behind. With the job there half done, Bly and Secura were sent to Felucia. This frustrated Bly, whose focus on mission goals over all else meant he considered Saleucami a blot on his record. Bly and Secura were to clash en route to Felucia, as General Grievous launched his attack on Coruscant then. Bly insisted that he and Secura continue to Felucia, as they were too far from Coruscant to help.



Order 66

On Felucia, Secura and Bly were leading a mission to prevent toxins being released into the planet's water supply when Order 66 declared the Jedi traitors. Forced to put aside their friendship, Bly shot Secura in the back, making sure death was instantaneous. He owed her that much at least. Bly went on to hunt other Jedi for the Empire, his inbred loyalty a guarantee of his chillingly expert service.

Bly was one of the few clone commanders who genuinely regretted having to kill the Jedi he worked with.

COMMERCE GUILD DESTROYER

RECUSANT-CLASS SUPPORT DESTROYER

The Commerce Guild Destroyer was a light capital ship fielded by the Confederacy of Independent Systems during the Clone Wars. Stripped down and overly armed for its size, the sinister, skeletal ship was let down by its very slow droid brain.

The *Recusant*-class light destroyers were nothing if not heavily armed, bristling as they were with nearly 120 capital-class weapons. As the 300-strong crew were all droids, serving a main droid control brain, the ship was stripped of any comforts and amenities required by an organic crew. The skeletal look of the end result added to the sinister look of the ships. However, the vessel had originally been designed for an organic crew by Mon Calamari technicians. Their schematics had been stolen by Quarren Isolationists and turned over to the Commerce Guild.

Not Very Bright

Hoersch-Kessel Drive Inc and Free Dac Volunteers Engineering Corps, under Techno Union supervision, built many thousands of the *Recusant*-class. The attrition rate on these vessels was very high, as the droid brain was slow to react (causing many collisions in battle) and tended to become overly focused on a single target – often pounding inert hulks to dust while ignoring active opponents tearing them apart at point-blank range. The ship had a fighter complement of some 240, and carried 40,000 deactivated battle droids, ready to perform boarding actions.

Disposable

Recusant-class destroyers were fielded in groups of four to six ships, with this deployment being a good bet to take down a Republic *Venator*-class Star Destroyer. The Battle of Coruscant witnessed the largest single deployment of the light destroyers, with a significant group forming a shield around the flagship *Invisible Hand* against other capital ships. After the Clone Wars, the *Recusant* ships saw some use with the Corporate Sector Authority, and the Rebel Alliance had one retro-fitted to be flown by an organic crew as per the original plans.

Recusant-class PROFILE

Size

1,187m long

Manufacturer

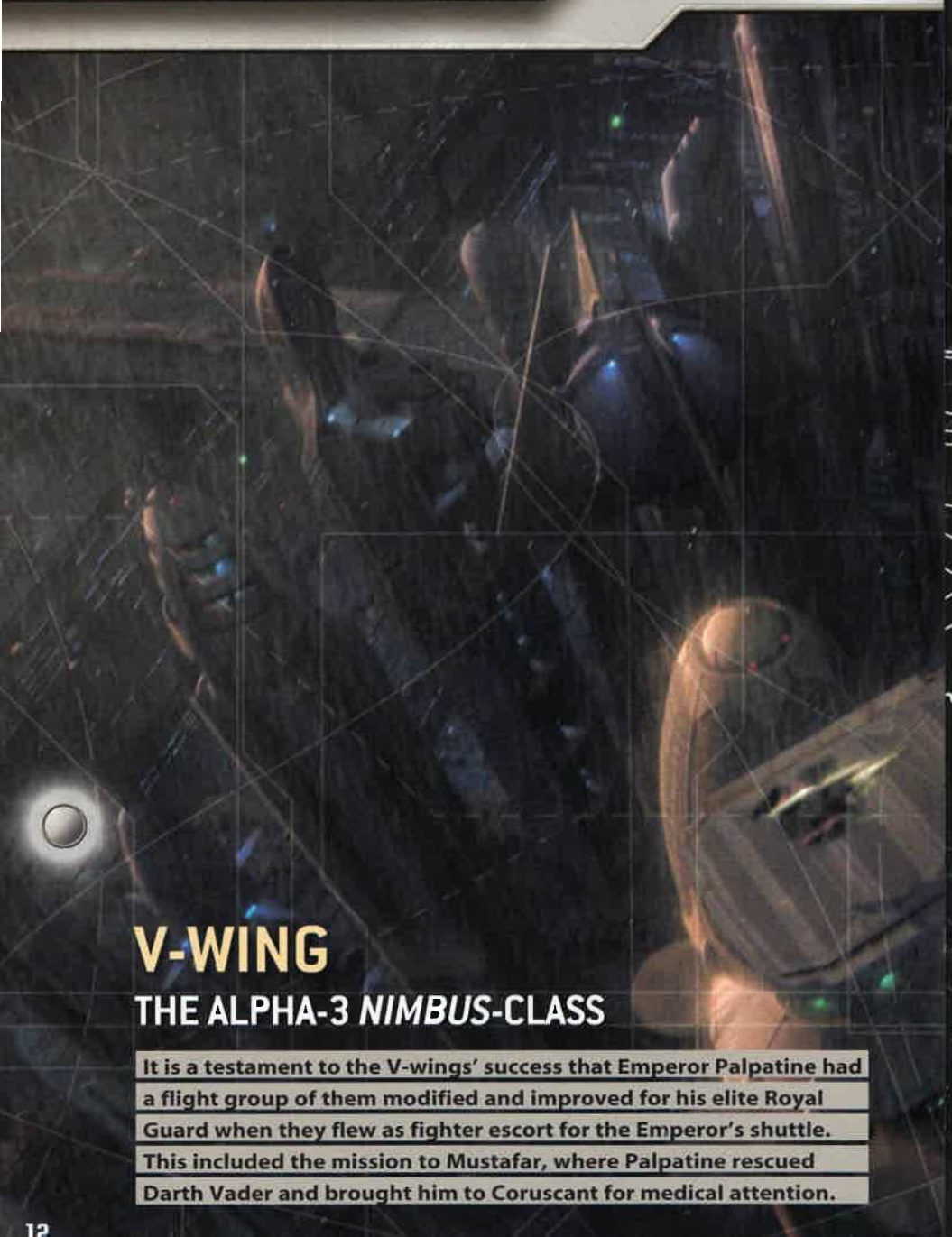
Hoersch-Kessel Drive Inc, Free Dac Volunteers Engineering Corps

Weapons

1x Heavy turbolaser cannon (prow), 4x Heavy turbolaser cannon, 6x Heavy turbolaser turrets, 5x Turbolaser cannon, 30x Dual laser cannon, 12x Dual light laser cannon, 60x Point-defence laser cannon

Affiliation

Confederacy of Independent Systems



V-WING

THE ALPHA-3 *NIMBUS*-CLASS

It is a testament to the V-wings' success that Emperor Palpatine had a flight group of them modified and improved for his elite Royal Guard when they flew as fighter escort for the Emperor's shuttle. This included the mission to Mustafar, where Palpatine rescued Darth Vader and brought him to Coruscant for medical attention.

V-WING

Type
Alpha-3 *Nimbus*-class V-wing starfighter

Size
7.9m long, 3.8m wide,
5.84m high (wings extended)

Manufacturer
Kuat Systems Engineering

Maximum Speed
1,050 km/h to 52,000 km/h in atmosphere
(deflector shields on)

Maximum Acceleration
4,800G (open space)

Crew
1x pilot, 1x astromech droid

Weapons
2x Twin laser cannon

Affiliation
Galactic Republic, Galactic Empire

Born to the develop
Kuat Systems Engin
firm that crafted the
– the Alpha-3 Nimbu
slow to first spread
forces. Streamlined
techniques soon sa
the V-19 Torrent as t
compact space sup

ment geniuses at
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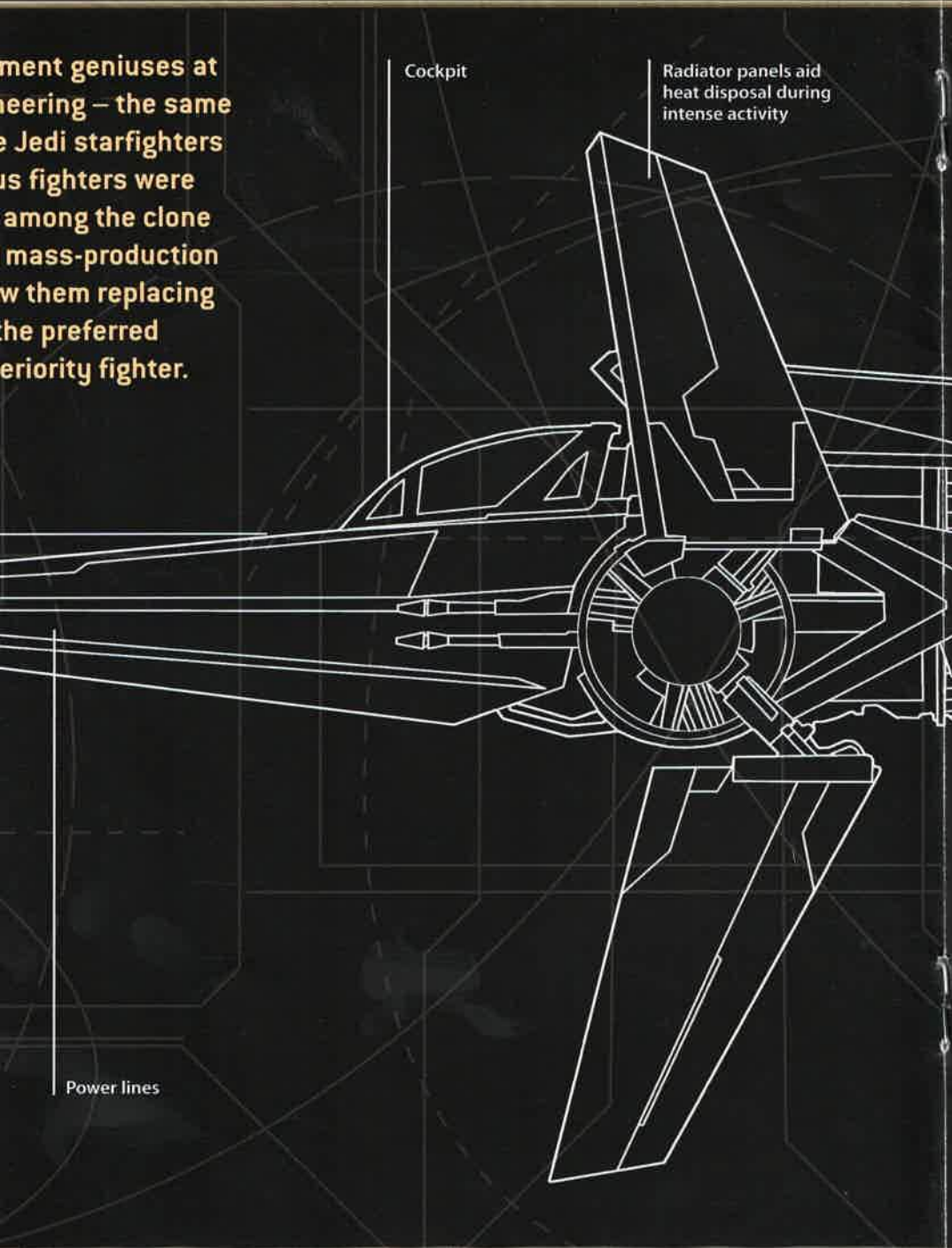


Deflector shields with heat sinks

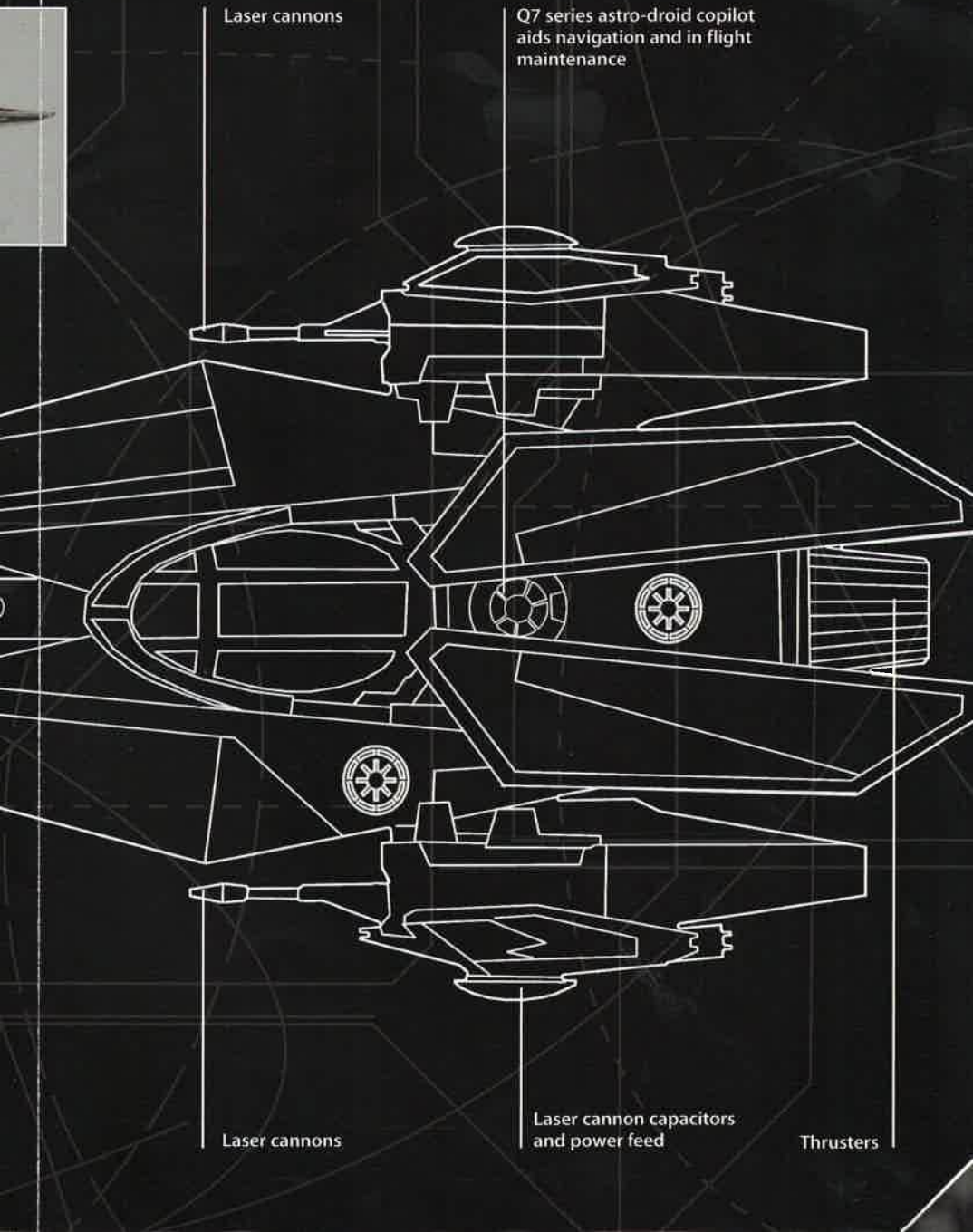
Foward sensors

Thrusters

Comm/scan processors

Incredible agility

The V-wing starfighter was designed and manufactured by the same company that made the Delta-7 and Eta-2 Jedi starfighters. The V-wing's incredible agility came from the two vertically stacked ion drive thrusters that were at least partially controlled by the complex combat computer system.


Laser cannons
Q7 series astro-droid copilot aids navigation and in flight maintenance
Laser cannons
Laser cannon capacitors and power feed
Thrusters

CLONE SHOCK TROOPERS

SINISTER SECURITY

As Supreme Chancellor, Palpatine brought in many new security measures on Coruscant: some secret, some not. Towards the end of the Clone Wars, a new group of clone troopers, wearing distinctive red-and-white Phase II armour, began patrolling the streets of Coruscant. They were called 'stormtroopers'.

The shock troopers were created as enforcers to maintain order on the streets of Coruscant, and to protect the people. The War Council Advisory Panel and the Homeworld Security Command worked with Palpatine to decide their mandate and powers and the fact that, to maintain their independence, they would answer only to Palpatine. As with the 501st Legion, clone troopers were brought from Kamino and housed and trained in secret facilities close to the Supreme Chancellor.

Armoured Fist

From the outset, they were considered heavy-handed by many of the population. The troopers had the right to stop and search anyone, or to walk into any property at any time for 'security reasons'. At the same time, the troops were seen to move against dissenters, seizing property, taking people away to help with enquiries, and breaking up protests using sometimes extreme violence. The people dubbed their new 'protectors' stormtroopers, a nickname that stuck and carried over to the seemingly numberless ranks of white-armoured troops later used by the Empire.

At The Emperor's Call

Shock trooper officers were drawn from the ranks of Clone War veterans, such as Commander Fox. Indeed, their overall leader, Clone Commander Thire, had served with Jedi General Yoda on Rugosa. Thire worked with Intelligence Director Armand Isard to found the Homeworld Security Command. After the issuing of Order 66, Thire and his men became the feared Coruscant Guards, continuing to work with Isard to maintain security on the Empire's capital, with little regard for any concepts such as liberty or justice.

Close to hand

Commander Thire, CC-4477, served Emperor Palpatine directly at the very end of the Clone Wars. His men searched for Yoda after the Jedi and the Emperor had fought in the Senate. Thire also went with Palpatine to Mustafar to rescue Darth Vader.

PROFILE

Imperial Shock Troopers

Species

Human (clone)

Height

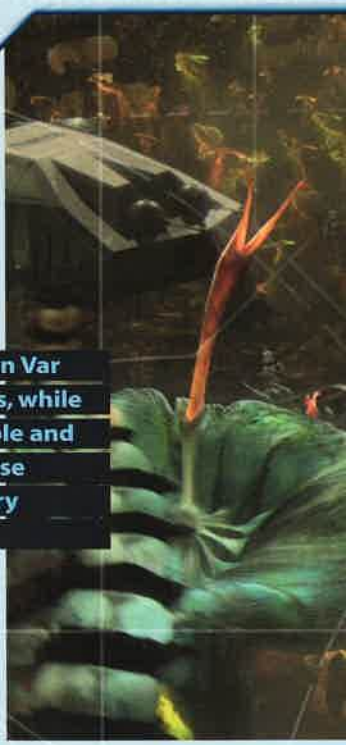
1.83 metres

Weapons

DC-15A blaster rifles, DS-15S blasters, Thermal detonators

Affiliation

Galactic Empire



FELUCIA

PATH TO THE DARK SIDE

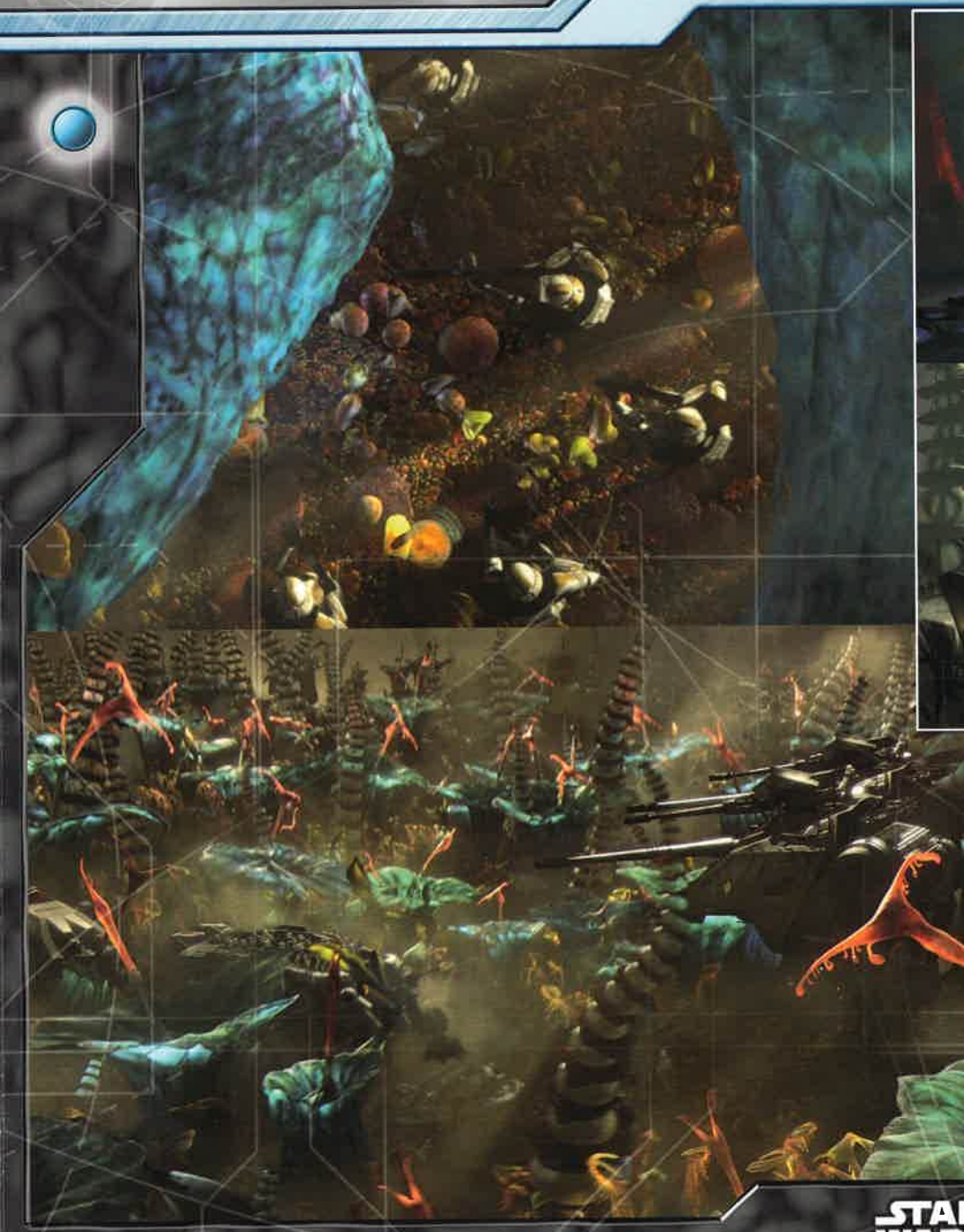
In the Outer Rim Territories, between the Rhen Var and Colunda Sectors, the world of Felucia was, while teeming with life, one of the more inhospitable and unusual worlds in the galaxy. Bathed in intense ultraviolet radiation, it was home to some very strange, often unique, flora and fauna.

The planet was hot and humid, with much of the atmospheric moisture faintly caustic – seriously enough that most of the flora and fauna evolved to be tough, rubbery and fibrous. The dark, cloudy skies, the muddy terrain, and the many caverns and tunnels meant that fungi and ferns were the dominant flora. A lack of nutrients meant that many species of aggressive carnivorous plants also evolved on the moist, often mist-bound world. All of the native life of Felucia had long adapted to the ultraviolet radiation from the system's sun – also called Felucia. Many life forms were translucent, to allow as much radiation as possible to simply pass through them. Others evolved a reflective skin or carapace, or even an oily natural sun-screen. Other creatures and plants lived entirely below ground.

Outside Aggression

A number of non-native species abounded on Felucia, though how they came to arrive there remains a mystery. To survive the violent native plants, animals and insects, they of course had to be aggressive and effective hunters. Acklay and rancor were not native to the world, but both did well there, feeding off the local arthropods, gastropods, invertebrates and avian species. The rancor creatures, smaller and less intelligent than those found on their homeworld, were domesticated by the native Felucians, and were used much as they had been on their native Dathomir, as war mounts and as beasts of burden. There were a large number of sarlacc present on Felucia, including the largest ever recorded. It occupied an area of many kilometres in the Felucian Ancient Abyss. So large was it that the native Felucians used it (relatively) safely as a refuge from the Empire.

Both the Republic and the Separatists found Felucia a dangerous world to battle through, with each suffering many 'environmental casualties'.



When Darth Vader's secret apprentice came to Felucia, he discovered that all but the largest wreckage of the Clone Wars conflicts had been lost to the Felucian fauna

Behind The Scenes...

Felucia was one of the planets created early on in the concept stage of the development of Episode III. The planets were all intended as battle grounds of the Clone Wars. The first paintings, from October of 2002, showed this weird, wild 'Vietnam-style' world covered in strange, monstrous fungal growths and plant pods, and an AT-TE picking its way gingerly through.

The Living Force

The unique fungi-jungles of Felucia held another wonder beyond the plants and creatures there. Many of the life forms, including the Felucians themselves, were Force sensitive. This close connection to the Living Force was both a blessing and a curse, as the planet could easily be influenced by both the light and dark side of the Force. Unfortunately, events during and after the Clone Wars pushed the planet dangerously close to the dark side.

World at War

During the Clone Wars, the Gossam Shu Mai was president of the Commerce Guild, one of the major Separatist parties. Mai made Felucia the centre of Commerce Guild operations in the war, leading the Republic to attack it.

Meanwhile, the natives went literally underground. At the end of the war, a number of Jedi were killed there on the issuing of Order 66, including Aayla Secura and Barriss Offee. During the Jedi Purge, Master Shaak Ti hid on Felucia and tried to ready the natives and embittered Padawan Maris Brood for the inevitable assault from Darth Vader and the Empire. She was killed by Vader's apprentice, and Brood and the Felucians fell to the dark side. Later, the Empire sought to wipe out the natives, considering their Force abilities a threat. The planet's pain would last for many years.

HYPERSPACE

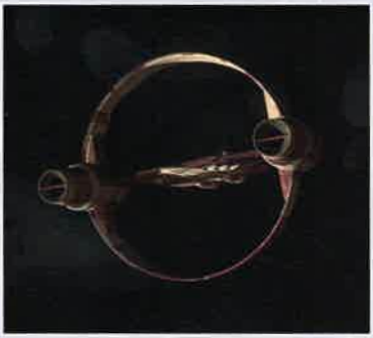
A CONVENIENT CONCEPT

The plotline in which the *Millennium Falcon* escaped to hyperspace after escaping from Tatooine in the first *Star Wars* film did not appear in the story until the fourth draft of Episode IV. Since then, this extremely useful 'shortcut', allowing ships to travel great distances very quickly, has appeared in every *Star Wars* film.

Science fiction has often toyed with faster-than-light travel. Ever since hyperspace first became a useful tool for getting characters from one side of the *Star Wars* galaxy to the other, numerous authors working in the Expanded Universe have sought to explain exactly what lies behind the concept.

Alternate Dimension

In real-world physics, faster-than-light (FTL) travel is thought to be impossible. In the *Star Wars* galaxy, starships with hyperdrives can enter an alternate dimension, perhaps a whole other universe, where FTL travel is possible. Corellian and Duros engineers created the first hyperdrive engines, reverse engineering mysterious artefacts of the very ancient lost Rakatan Empire. This technological breakthrough brought the galaxy together in the first Galactic Republic. Now, all larger starships may have hyperdrive engines while some smaller craft, Jedi Delta-7 starfighters for example, use external engines that they bolt into for the trip.



Dangerous

Though hyperspace travel in the *Star Wars* galaxy is a regular event, it is by no means entirely safe. Planets, suns, black holes, asteroid fields, other ships are all hazards that have to be avoided by careful calculations using a navicomputer. Keeping their navigational data up to date is a matter of life and death for all pilots. All hyperdrive systems have failsafes built in so that if the ship's sensors detect a gravitic anomaly, the

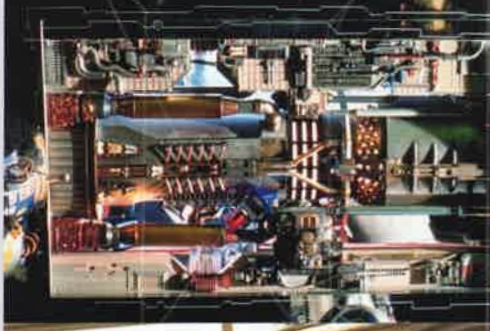
Lost forever

No pilot in his right mind would make the jump to hyperspace without the correct coordinates, or with a malfunctioning hyperdrive. Cantina stories were full of legends of lost ships, even whole lost fleets, doomed to wander the alternate dimension forever.

computers drop the ship out of hyperspace early. This safety feature was exploited by the Empire, which created *Interdictor* Star Destroyers that used massive artificial gravity generators to pull ships out of hyperspace, or to prevent ships from fleeing into hyperspace.

Class

The speed at which an engine can propel a starship through hyperspace is denoted by the engine's class, with the lower class number – also known as a hyperdrive multiplier – indicating a faster engine. Actual journey times in hyperspace are not always a simple matter of distance, however. Rather, they depend on the number of navigational hazards. This is particularly the case if the route is a popular one – travel in the Core Worlds is always slower than in the Outer Rim.



THE V-WING

PRECURSOR OF THE TIE FIGHTER

CREATING THE V-WING

1 The Alpha-3 *Nimbus*-class V-wing starfighter is the first ship in the Prequel Trilogy to use the letter-wing naming convention of the Original Trilogy.

2 The introduction of the fast, agile V-wings made it possible for clone pilots to keep up with the Jedi starfighters.

5 Animation Director Rob Coleman was originally going to put TIE fighters in at the end of *Revenge of the Sith*.

6 George Lucas decided to use the V-wings instead, saying that the Empire would have 19 years to develop the TIE fighters.

In the Battle of Coruscant, the V-wings that flew with the ARC-170s and the Eta-2 interceptors showed their worth, fending off attacks from droid tri-fighters and Vulture-droids that were defending General Grievous' flagship, *Invisible Hand*.

3 The V-wings were manufactured by Kuat Systems Engineering, who also developed the Jedi starfighters – including the Eta-2 shown above.

4 One of the duties of the V-wing starfighters was to accompany the Emperor's shuttle (shown above) at the end of Episode III.

7 However, the sound of the V-wing engines, heard as they fly toward the medical centre, are reminiscent of the TIE fighters.

8 In shape, the V-wings are the forerunners of the A-wing starfighters from *Return of the Jedi* as can be seen in this top-down view.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 The reconstruction of Darth Vader harks back to which famous monster movie?

2 This was a production sketch for which planet?

3 What colour distinguishes clone troops in the service of Emperor Palpatine?

ANSWERS:

1. The darkened, smoke-filled room at the top of a high tower evokes memories of Frankenstein's laboratory in the Boris Karloff film from 1931.

2. This is a production sketch of Felucia. Gamers got to explore the planet thoroughly in *Star Wars*: The Force Unleashed.

3. The shock troops and the Emperor's Royal Guard all wear red livery.

V

Valarian, Lady

Character
Expanded Universe

On Tatooine, Jabba had only one real competitor in his latter years. Lady Valarian was a female Whiphid, born into a life of crime on the ice planet of Toola. A crime lord of some considerable standing by the time she was only around 20 standard years old, Valarian took over a hotel and casino built from a converted cargo hauler in Mos Eisley on Tatooine. With the casino as a front, her main business was in arms trading, slaves and information. After many years of quiet conflict between the two, Valerian was quick to take over many of Jabba's more lucrative criminal businesses following the Hutt's death. She became so powerful that even the New Republic had to deal with her on her own terms.

Valorum, Finis

Character
Episode I

Senator for the Lytton Sector, Finis Valorum ran for Chancellorship of the Republic 40 years before the Battle of Yavin. He was to be the last democratic Chancellor of the Republic. One of the negotiators who brought about the end of the Stark Hyperspace War, Valorum received a great deal of support. This carried over into a second term as Chancellor. However, Valorum fell foul of the machinations of Sith Lord Darth Sidious – the secret identity of Senator Palpatine of Naboo. While seeming to support Valorum, Palpatine ensured that the Chancellor's reputation was destroyed by various accusations and conspiracies. Finally, Valorum was ousted in a vote of no confidence. Palpatine ensured Valorum's continued silence in retirement by having him assassinated in a 'terrorist attack'.

Ventress, Asajj

Character
Expanded Universe

Of all the foes faced by the Jedi, Dark Jedi Asajj Ventress was second only to Count Dooku himself. A female Rattataki, she initially began her training in the ways of the Force under Jedi Knight Ky Narec. When he was slain, Ventress fell to her anger and her desire for revenge. She killed twelve warlords of Rattatak and became *de facto* ruler of the barbaric world. Styling herself a Sith, she was recruited by Count Dooku and became a Separatist commander in the Clone Wars. She clashed with Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi a number of times, and with other Jedi who were less fortunate and did not escape her twin red-bladed lightsabers. Ventress was finally defeated on Boz Pity, after being betrayed by Dooku. As she apparently lay dying, she transcended her own anger, leaving the dark side behind. However, Ventress in fact entered a deep healing trance, emerging long enough to order her pilots to take her far, far away from Dooku, the Jedi and the war.

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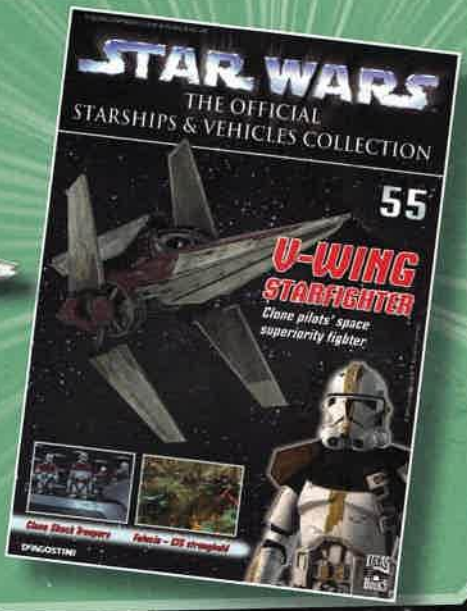

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V-WING

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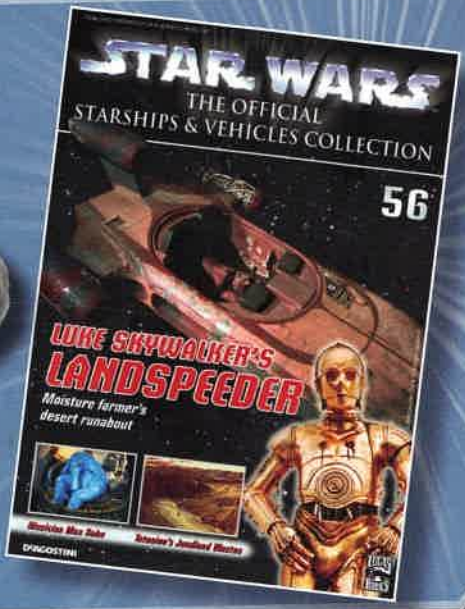

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